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Drawing The Route Map To The Future

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The future of security and of alliances will primarily be determined by the nature of risks and dangers our nations will be confronted with whereas the nature of warfare will to a considerable degree be determined by technology and demography..

The nature of the risks seems to suggest that they will increasingly be transnational, that they may include dangers posed by non-state actors who will use military means and that they are no longer limited to a region.

Alliances should be able to avail themselves of all instruments of international politics needed for the entire range from conflict prevention through intervention to post-conflict stabilisation. They have to be capable of keeping the risks at a distance from the sanctuary which the treaty area of the respective alliance constitutes and they have to formulate strategies which reflect these objectives.

Taking these realities into account the European nations have to conclude that there is and will be no security for Europe without the US and the US have to acknowledge that they need allies, too. No nation state will for the foreseeable future be able to take care of his security on his own. Alliances are the right answer to the security challenges of the future, definitely an answer superior to any ad hoc coalition of the willing.

Domestically the primary challenge is to make the electorate aware of the dangers and risks and to promote the general recognition in Europe that the European approach towards conflict resolution, the peaceful and patient search for a compromise, is simply not yet applicable on a global scale. Although the world will be increasingly interconnected and interdependent it will nevertheless continue to consist of post-modern, modern and pre-modern societies.

Each of these three forms of societies has its own way towards conflict resolution and its own way how to fight and win a war. War, however, is and will remain an instrument of politics for the modern and post-modern societies of our world. This means that post-modern societies have to be prepared to fight and to prevail in post-modern, modern and pre-modern wars.

Post-modern societies can no longer afford the luxury of risking a war of attrition since they all will increasingly suffer from shortages as far as manpower is concerned. This factor as well as the incredible velocity of the technological progress one will see in the next decades in the fields of C4ISR and precision strike capability will drive the post-modern nations into the direction of network centric warfare (NCW). Its aim is no longer the destruction or attrition of enemy forces in a three dimensional operation, its aim is the paralysation of an opponent's command and control centre in a four dimensional operation which will include the cyberspace as the new fourth dimension.

The key to transformation is the ability to link the three levels of NCW, the sensor level, the C4 level and the shooters level, and to achieve one coherent network. The key capabilities are therefore C4ISR, precision strike and rapid deployment.

As most nations possess some precision strike capability and some deployability or have plans under way to possess them in the near future the key to transformation is C4ISR. The first step to achieve it and to link existing capabilities as well as to make maximum use of legacy forces is a capable ground surveillance system in conjunction with state of the art C4.

Europe will most probably not be able to take steps of a similar dimension and within the same period of time as it is envisaged in the US. To this end Europe should identify which capabilities the European armed forces most urgently need in order to acquire a limited European force projection and intervention capability and what Europe has to do to better protect its homeland. Europe should then decide to create multi-national enabling

component forces which will give Europe some limited capabilities of its own and which, being fully interoperable, could at the same time reinforce respective US assets and capabilities.

This approach could result in a route map to the future which is affordable, which transforms Europe to be an actor in the military domain as well and which could strengthen the indispensable transatlantic link.

Whether Europe will be able to take this way will primarily depend on the necessary political will . Allied nations will go down this road only if they can rely on the other nations' resolve to share risks collectively and on their preparedness to shoulder the burdens. The recent developments in Europe have shown that Europe must improve in this respect. The European nations have to be convinced that they can rely on each other and our American allies need to be reassured of the reliability of all their European allies as well.